Reflections on "What you (really) need to know 1-25-2012

This article is about the evolving world we live in, and yet university education has seen little in change over the past few decades. I often wonder why the university class format has not changed in a very long time. Secondary schools stress differentiated instruction, smaller class sizes, one on one instruction, group work, and a student centered class environment, etc. etc. but universities seem to have yet adopted some of these changes that have taken place. Students graduate from high school and advance into an education environment that stresses individual work, not colloboration, class lectures with one professor talking in front of a room filled with sometimes hundreds of students, memorization of an abundance factual information to be regugitated, and assessments based solely on massive multiple choice final exams. The lecture format reminds me of Paulo Friere's banking model of education, where professors spout lectures depositing information into there students brains. Differentiated instruction seems non existant in the current format and organization of courses universities offer packing hundreds of students into a stadium-like class room with one professor. In preparing students for this environment, one would think a similar model would be put in place at high schools. I fear if this would happen it would have dire results for education with many more students failing out.

To the credit of univerities, many have innovated offering online courses, expanded departments, embraced technology innovations, and are still at the cutting edge of research and development. This article offers ways in which univerities will evolve over the next decade, many of which I solely agree with. Many of these suggestions will be implemented at the secondary level as well. These are some of the statements I believe shoudl be implemented.

1. The Educational system needs to focus on the processing and use of information, not memorization and regugitation of it - this is the definition of UNDERSTANDING

2. Increase collaboration in every level of the educational system - the author discusses the career world, and how current jobs require collaboration. When I read this though, I had to ask myself what was the reason for going to university - was it to prepare you for the career world, or to make you a better person, a more creative, intelligent, broad, and knolwedgeable person. The changing definition of what it is to attend university is a major debate that is ongoing today, especially with the rise in tuition rates and the high unemplyment rate, does going to college and graduating with massive debt justify the outcome of a jobless world?

3. Embrace technology, take advantage of advances that could be use to teach and learn in a effective ways

4. Differentiate instruction - integrate technology. Smaller classes, more ways to impart knowledge, the use of technology as an advanced instruction and learning tool

5. This step talks about the slow death of foreign language in school curriculums, the author poses an interesting question with the global society and advanced translation technology depleting the value of requiring students to take a foriegn langauge. Personally i would lean more towards keeping a part of the curriculm, but my foreign language class experience gave me little benefits once I entered the working world.

6. More emphasis on data analysis - I agree with this because of the society we live in today, data is used every where for everything, we live in a statistical world from personal life to business life.

I found this article fascinating with ideas that should be discussed more in the conversations we have about education, secondary and post secondary. The author ends the article with a statement about how education will change more in the next decade then it has in the past 3. I believe this is true and we're beginning to see the transition with increased media attention on failing schools, drastic measures taken to improve a failing education system in america, and the continued rise of globalization.